



Lenten Message 2025
His Eminence Frank Cardinal Leo
Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May Jesus and Mary be in your souls.

I am writing to you as we prepare to enter the Holy Season of Lent; a sacred time that invites a heightened awareness of God’s love in our lives, and prayerful discernment on how best to cooperate with His love. This needed cooperation with grace requires true repentance as well. The spiritual renewal that is sought earnestly by men and women of faith will come about only if the heart accepts to change. This year our Lenten observance takes on an added spiritual dimension, the Jubilee Year with its focus on Hope, born from God, born in our hearts.

As Pilgrims of Hope, our traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving help to orient our thoughts, words and deeds toward God, His Kingdom and in steadfast hope. **Prayer** is especially important, insofar as “hope is expressed and nurtured in prayer, especially in the Our Father, the summary of everything that hope leads us to desire” (CCC 1820). **Fasting** “takes up the hopes that inspire [our] activities and purifies them so as to order them to the Kingdom of heaven” (CCC 1818). And finally, **Almsgiving**, when done with compassion and in solidarity with those who suffer, especially the sick, the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed, are concrete expressions of hope (cf. *Spes non Confundit*, 7-15). **Have you given some thought to how you will embody these three practices in your Lenten journey this year?**

Lest we forget, at the core of Lent’s 40 days is the **Paschal Mystery**—the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Pope Francis suggests that to “experience Lent in hope entails growing in the realization that, in Jesus Christ, we are witnesses of new times, in which God is “making all things new” (cf. Rev 21:1-6). It means receiving the hope of Christ, who gave his life on the cross and was raised by God on the third day, and always being “prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls [us] to account for the hope that is in [us]” (1 Pet 3:15)” (*Message of the Holy Father Francis for Lent 2021*). **Are we really and acutely aware of the newness of life which the Lord desires of us and is fashioning in us at this very moment?** As Pilgrims of Hope, we walk with Christ through His suffering and death on the Cross, to a profound hope in the resurrection and witnesses to the new life that is offered to us. In this way the Cross is the ultimate symbol of Christian hope—what appears to be defeat and despair on Good Friday is revealed in the resurrection as the triumph of life over death.

We live in challenging times and there are myriads of voices that proclaim fear, despair, and desolation. Taking seriously the call to be Pilgrims of Hope, we readily listen to the voice of Christ, knowing that “hope does not disappoint” (Rom. 5:5). Pope Benedict XVI wrote: “The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life” (*Spes Salvi*, 2). Let us boldly dare to live differently, to live as one who has hope. **What does that “difference” look like in your life and relationships?**



Hoping as intended by the Lord necessitates that we are willfully engaged in a continuous process of interior purification and repentance, which means we are striving to reorient our entire life, to return back to the Lord and away from sinful thoughts, words and deeds. Welcoming the grace of renewal entails desiring and deciding to place all our trust and all our hope in God’s truth and mercy and walk resolutely in His presence.

In conclusion, let us remember the Catechism teaching that Lent is an “intense moment of the Church’s penitential practice” (CCC, 1438). But Lent is also a time of **renewal** and **reconciliation**—two hallmarks of the Jubilee Year as well. I encourage you to take advantage of this sacred time of 40 days and discover the hope into which we were born. To assist you this Lenten Season, do avail yourself of the numerous **Lenten resources** found on the Archdiocese of Toronto [website](#). There you will find [Pope Francis’ 2025 Lenten Message](#), a variety of [Online Retreats and Reflections](#), [Lenten Activities for Families](#), and much more.

While wishing you all and your loved ones and communities a most sacred Lent, I invoke upon us all the powerful blessing of Almighty God through the loving intercession of the Blessed Mother.